

JUN 8 1993

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EPDS

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1. CASE NO. 930512CCN1610		2. INVESTIGATOR'S ID 8 0 5 2		3. OFFICE CODE 8 3 0		<b>EPIDEMIOLOGIC INVESTIGATION REPORT</b>
4. DATE OF ACCIDENT YR MO DAY 9 3 0 5 0 3		5. DATE INVESTIGATION INITIATED YR MO DAY 9 3 0 5 1 9				
6. SYNOPSIS OF ACCIDENT OR COMPLAINT For 2 years, a consumer & her family have continuously experienced a foul smelling chemical odor being emitted from the window screens in their house. On 5/3/93, while the 44 year old female consumer was transporting one of the screens to the dealer for repairs, she developed a headache and an upset stomach. Contact with the screen manufacturer revealed that the vinyl coated fiberglass screens break down when sunlight hits the screens, causing the odor.						
7. LOCATION (Home, school, etc.) home		8. CITY Trenton		9. STATE M I		
10A. FIRST PRODUCT window screens		11A. TRADE/BRAND NAME, MODEL NUMBER, MANUFACTURER & ADDRESS Phifer Wire Products, P.O. Box 1700, Tuscaloosa, AL		35403		
10B. SECOND PRODUCT none		11B. TRADE/BRAND NAME, MODEL NUMBER, MANUFACTURER & ADDRESS n/a				
12. AGE OF VICTIM 0 4 4		13. SEX (Use numerical code) MALE - 1 FEMALE - 2 UNKNOWN - 3 2		14. DISPOSITION no treatment		0
15. INJURY DIAGNOSIS headache		7 1				
16. BODY PART head		17. RESPONDENT(S) (Mother, Friend) (victim) consumer complainant		18. TYPE INVESTIGATION ON SITE 1 TELEPHONE 2 OTHER 3 1		19. TIME SPENT 0 8 0
20. ATTACHMENTS multiple		21. CASE SOURCE consumer complaint		22. REVIEWED BY 8 3 1 1		YR Travel = 1 hr. MO DAY 9 3 0 6 0 2
23. PERMISSION TO DISCLOSE NAMES (NON-WEISS CASES ONLY) CPSC MAY DISCLOSE MY NAME <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CPSC MAY NOT DISCLOSE MY NAME <input type="checkbox"/>						
24. NARRATIVE (See Instructions on Other Side) See attached.  <b>MFR/PRVLR NOTIFIED 7/11/94</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Comments made <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Comments attached <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excisions/Revisions <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Firm has not requested further notice  (USE OTHER SIDE AND ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY)						25. REGIONAL OFFICE DIRECTOR REVIEW DATE

### ACCIDENT INFORMATION

I visited the accident site, interviewed the consumer complainant (owner of the product), and observed the product (window screens). During my visit, the consumer cut out two separate pieces of the vinyl coated fiberglass window screens from two separate screen frames at her home. I obtained these two pieces of window screens from the consumer, and identified them as Sample No. R-830-5015. I also took photographs of the window screens. I also inspected the retailer from where the consumer & her husband had purchased the windows & window screens for their home. My inspectional findings are reported under separate cover.

The consumer, and her family live in a single family house in a suburb to a large city. The consumer stated that in late June, 1988, she & her husband purchased new windows & window screens for the 14 windows in their home. They purchased these items from a local retailer, which was one of several retail outlets in the area that exclusively sell windows for this specific window manufacturer. (The window manufacturer only assembles the screening material to the frames, but does not actually manufacture the screening material itself.) The consumer stated that she & her husband installed most of the new windows & screens in their home themselves in early July, 1988. (She remembered that it was the 4th of July weekend for that year.) She stated that at the time the retailer installed the windows & screens for the two largest windows in the consumer's home.

From 1988 through early 1991 the windows & window screens were in place with no problem. However, from 1991 through the present time, she and other family members continuously experienced a foul smelling chemical odor being emitting from the window screens. She stated that the window screens on the sunny side of the house had the worst odor, and that the odor seemed to be the worst on sunny days. However, no one suffered any adverse symptoms at this time.

The consumer stated that on 4/29/93 she saw a local TV news broadcast that alleged that a certain type of window screen made by the screen manufacturer (manufacturer of the screening material & not the manufacturer of the frame, or the assembler of the screening material to the frame), emitted chemical fumes that were making some people ill. The consumer thought about it at the time, and believed that she might have the same kind of window screens in her home. She took some action a few days later when she went to the retailer to repair the hard plastic corner frame to one of the window screens that had broken.

On 5/3/93 (day of the accident) the consumer took the window screen to the retailer for repair. The consumer stated that while she was driving in the car with the window screen, she developed a headache & upset stomach from the fumes emitting from the screen. The consumer sought no medical treatment.

The consumer stated that when she arrived at the retailer, she explained the entire problem to the retailer. The consumer stated that the retailer was aware of similar complaints, and offered to work with the screening material manufacturer to replace the consumer's window screens made by the same manufacturer with a different type of screen. The consumer accepted the offer, and she is currently working with the manufacturer of the screen to accomplish this task.

Later on 5/3/93 the consumer called the screen manufacturer (Phifer Wire Products) in Alabama, and explained the problem to the manufacturer's representative, Charlie Brakefield. The consumer stated that Mr. Brakefield had told her at this time that the manufacturer was aware of the problem, and that the fiberglass screens had been coated with vinyl that gradually breaks down when sunlight hits the screens, causing the odor. The consumer stated that Mr. Brakefield had told her that the screens were made in 1988 & 1989.

The consumer stated that about a week later a regional representative from Phifer Wire Products, Will Evans, visited her home to confirm the problem. (She believed that Mr. Evans represents Phifer in the states of Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana.) She stated that Mr. Evans confirmed the problem, and made arrangements for Phifer to replace the screens in her home free of charge. As of the day of my visit to the consumer's home (5/25/93), the window screens have not yet been replaced. The consumer also stated that Mr. Evans had given her 3 one page documents from Phifer regarding the problem with the screens. The first document was a form letter from Beverly Phifer, President of Phifer Wire Products, admitting the problem & offering to replace the screens in question. The other 2 pages consisted of signed statements from 2 university professors (2 different universities) stating that they have researched the Phifer vinyl coated fiberglass screens, and have concluded the following (the professors' separate conclusion statements): "The research does not show that Phifer screening emits toxic gases.", and "...no chemical emissions from Phifer screening at levels that could be considered toxic or hazardous". Exhibit #1 consists of copies of these 3 documents.

#### SAMPLE COLLECTION

I obtained two pieces of the vinyl coated fiberglass window screens from the consumer. The consumer had cut these pieces out for me from two separate screen frames when I was at her home. I identified the sample (both pieces) as Sample No. R-830-5015. I sent the sample to Cathy Kelsey, CECA.

#### CERTIFICATION/STANDARDS

None.

#### PRODUCT INFORMATION

The product consists of 14 window screens at the consumer's house. The window screens were brand new when that were installed in her home in July, 1988. The window screens are now 5 years old, but the problem with the foul smelling odors with the screens began approximately 3 years after they were installed. The screens are vinyl coated fiberglass screens. The manufacturer of the screens (screen material) is Phifer Wire Products, P.O. Box 1700, Tuscaloosa, AL 35403. Phifer actually manufacturers the screen material, and does not manufacture the frame or assemble the screen to the frame.

The manufacturer of the consumer's windows & the assembler of the window screens (screen material assembled to the frames) is The Pella Corporation, 102 Main St., Pella, Iowa 50219.

#### EXHIBITS

1 - Copies of the 3 documents from Phifer Wire Products that Phifer gave to the consumer.

Also, attached to the narrative are photographs of the window screens.

EXHIBIT 1

930512CCN1610

1 OF 3



## PHIFER WIRE PRODUCTS

P.O. BOX 1700 • TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA 35403-1700 U.S.A.

RE: Media Allegations Regarding Phifer Fiberglass Screening

Dear Sir or Madam:

Phifer screening products, manufactured by Phifer Wire Products, have been used successfully for over 40 years with millions of satisfied customers. Phifer has always maintained the highest quality standards as our years of success support.

In 1988 and 1989, we made a minor change in the manufacturing process of our fiberglass screening, that we expected would continue our manufacturing excellence. In 1989, we learned that the change could cause a deterioration of the vinyl coating of our fiberglass screening that in some cases may lead to the emission of an odor that is stronger than the odor of normal screening products.

The manufacturing problem was corrected in July 1989, and since that time Phifer Wire Products has attempted to locate and replace the fiberglass screens in question.

In addition, Phifer encouraged the testing of the odors by several independent scientists. These scientists agree that while the odor of deteriorating material can be annoying to some people, none of the research detected emissions of any substances at levels considered potentially harmful.

Phifer Wire Products, located in Tuscaloosa, Ala., is the largest manufacturer of screening products in the country. It has established a consumer toll-free telephone line for anyone with questions about their products. The toll-free number is 1-800-874-3007.

Sincerely yours,

Beverly Phifer  
President


EXHIBIT 1 930512ccw/1610  
STATEMENT OF DR. CLIFTON D. CRUTCHFIELD 2 OF 3

I am a Certified Industrial Hygienist affiliated with Health Effects Group, Inc. of Tucson, Arizona and employed by the University of Arizona.

In November of 1991, I was asked to research the content of emissions from PVC window screen material which I later learned was manufactured by Phifer Wire Products. Health Effects Group, Inc. is a completely independent firm and we were initially contacted and retained by an Arizona screen dealer not affiliated with Phifer Wire Products except as a customer. I submitted my report to this dealer on or about November 25, 1991. Following that report, research was done and reported by at least three other research organizations.

In February of 1993, Phifer Wire Products asked me to review my research data and the data compiled by the other three research facilities and submit an updated summary report on the possible health risk of exposure to Phifer screening. I submitted my final report on April 27, 1993. Phifer Wire authorized me to discuss my findings with any media representative or member of the general public.

In reviewing the transcripts and listening to the videotapes of recent television news broadcasts on the subject about which I conducted this research, I was surprised to hear the allegations that Phifer screening is "toxic" and that it emits "toxic gasses." I was even more surprised to learn that the stations reporting this had been provided copies of my reports and claimed to rely on those reports in reaching their conclusions. None of the research reports in question detected emissions of any substances from Phifer screening at levels considered potentially toxic. The research does not show that Phifer screening emits toxic gasses.

  
Clifton D. Crutchfield, Ph.D., C.I.H.

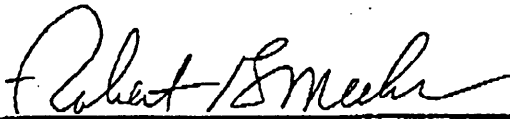
May 3, 1993  
Date

EXHIBIT 7 930512CCN/610

STATEMENT OF DR. ROBERT G. MEEKS

3 OF 3

I was a member of the faculty in the Department of Environmental Health Sciences at the University of Alabama School of Public Health when I supervised research on Phifer Wire Products PVC-coated fiberglass screening. I have reviewed the transcripts of recent television news broadcasts that purported to rely on my findings and conclusions in alerting their listeners to the dangers of "toxic screening" that "emits toxic gasses." The TV broadcasts inaccurately reported my findings and conclusions as well as those of other studies that were referenced in the broadcasts. I specifically advised the reporters who contacted me that it would be inaccurate to say "Phifer screens emit toxic gasses." Nevertheless, that allegation was made in the broadcast reports. My research and the in-home air testing done by Clayton Environmental detected no chemical emissions from Phifer screening at levels that could be considered toxic or hazardous.



Robert G. Meeks, Ph.D.

May 3, 1993  
Date

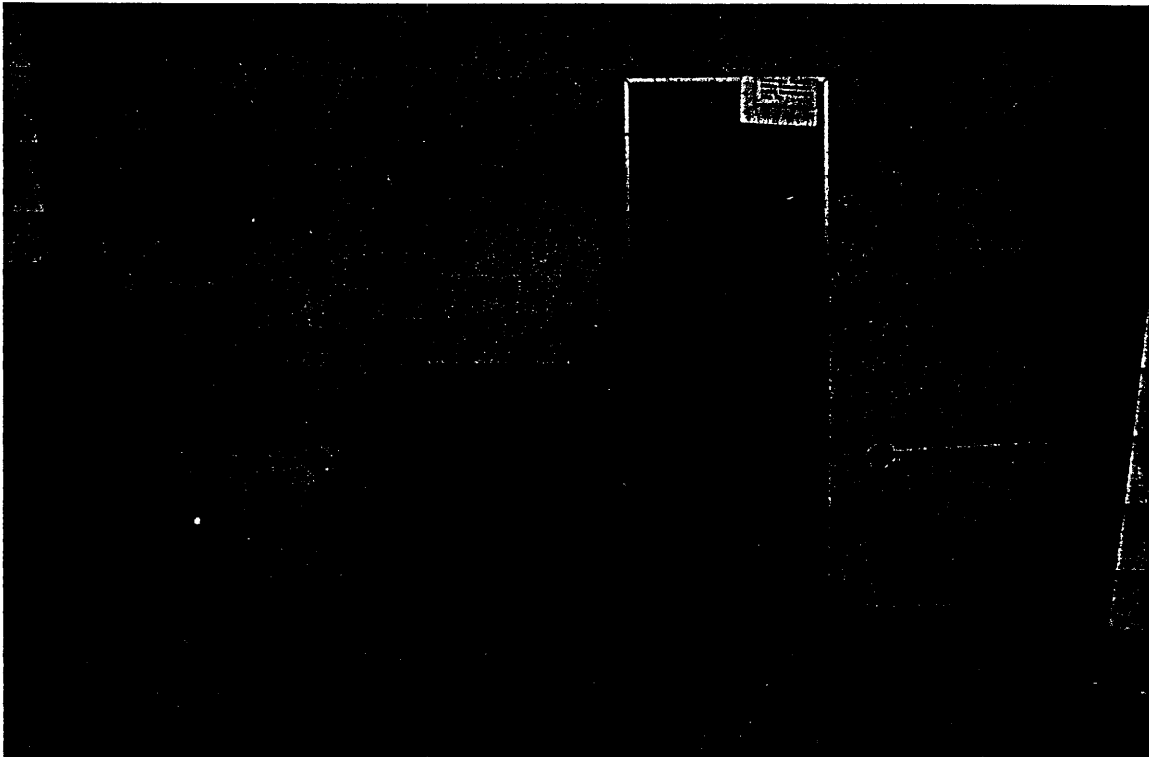
Photo #1 shows the front of the consumer's house, and some of the windows where the screens are located (door is not included). The front of the house faces south, and receives the most sunlight.

Photo #2 shows a location where four screens are located in the bay window in the living room (viewed from inside of the living room). The living room is located in the front of the house. All four windows comprising the entire bay window could not be photographed inside, because of space limitations.

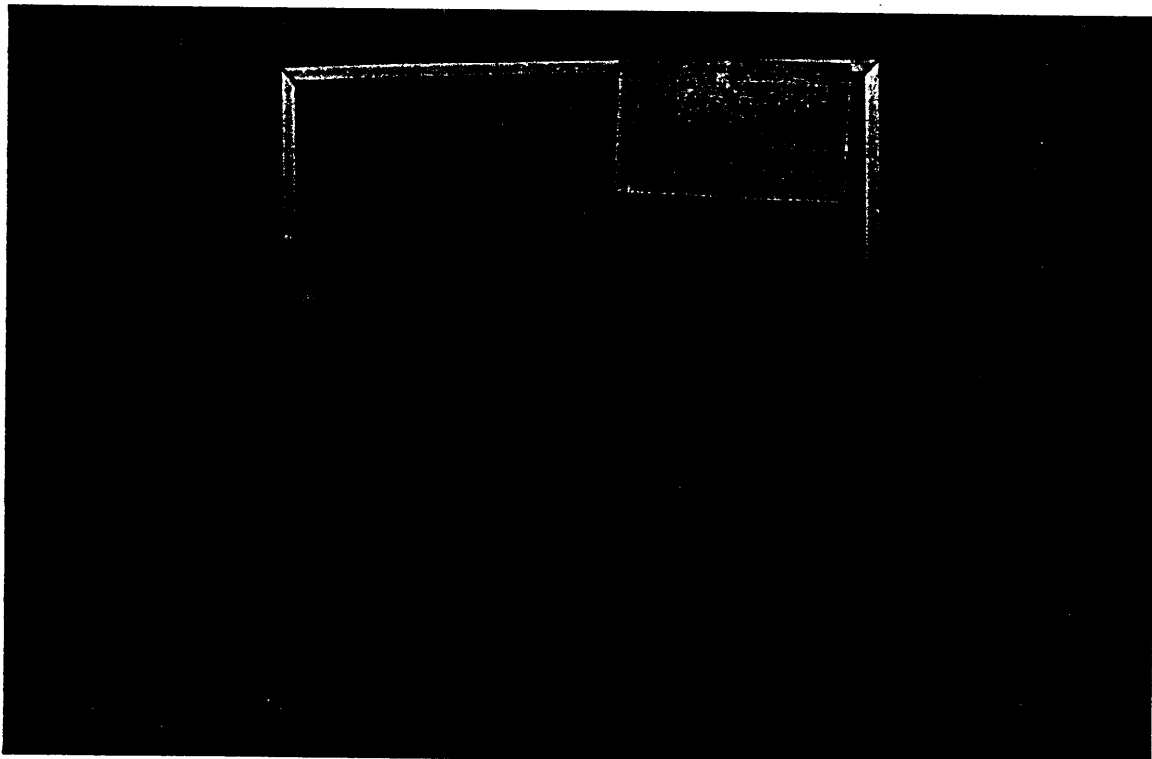




Photos #3 & #4 show two of the window screens. I obtained the two pieces of the screen that comprise the sample from these two screens.

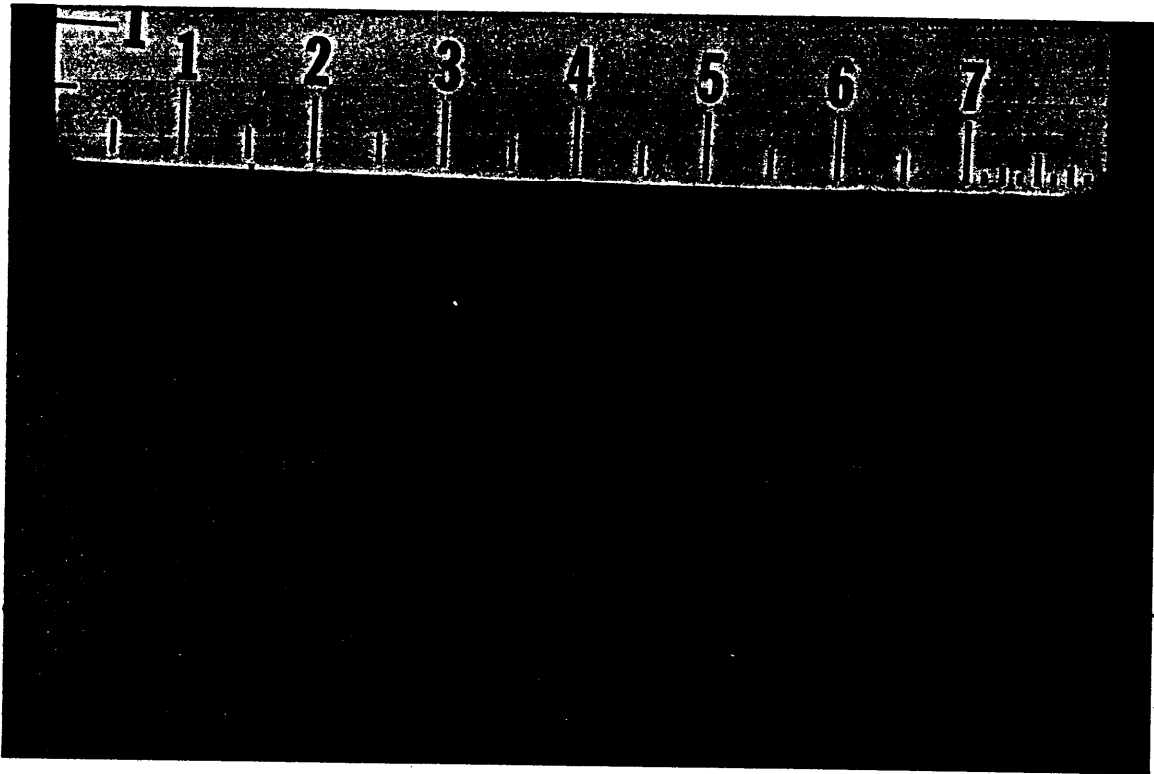


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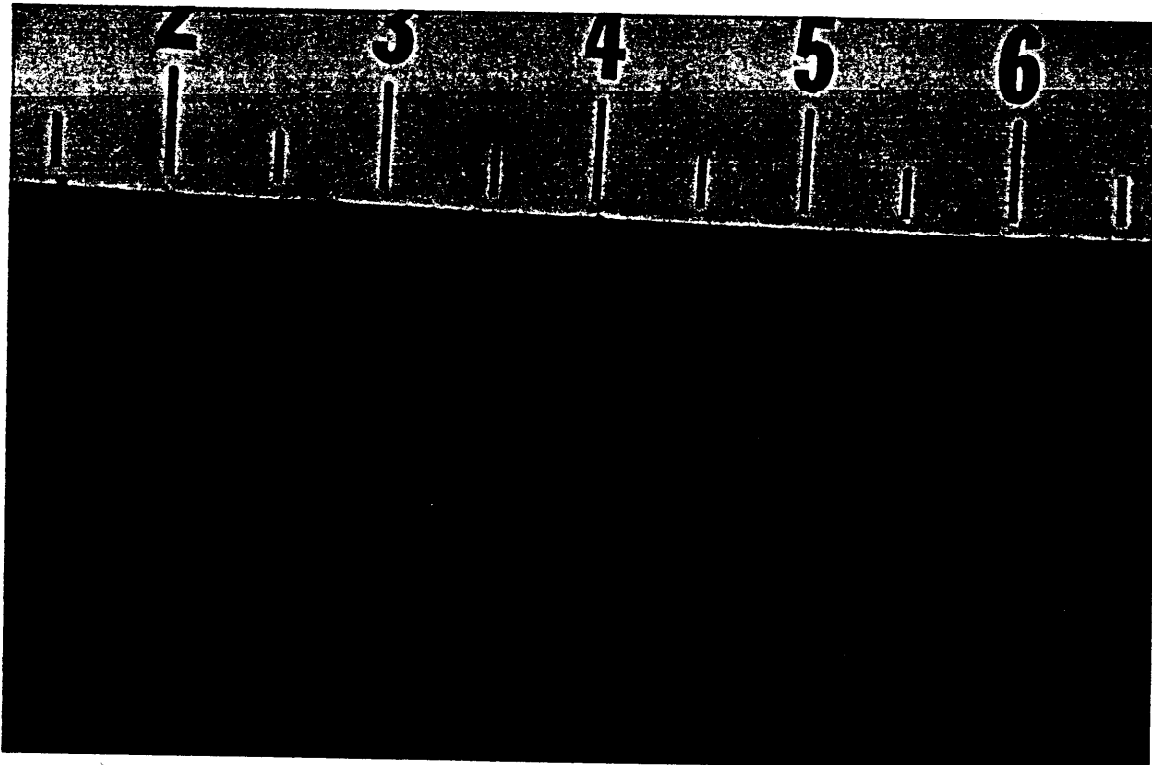


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Photos #5 & #6 show close-ups of the one of the screens.



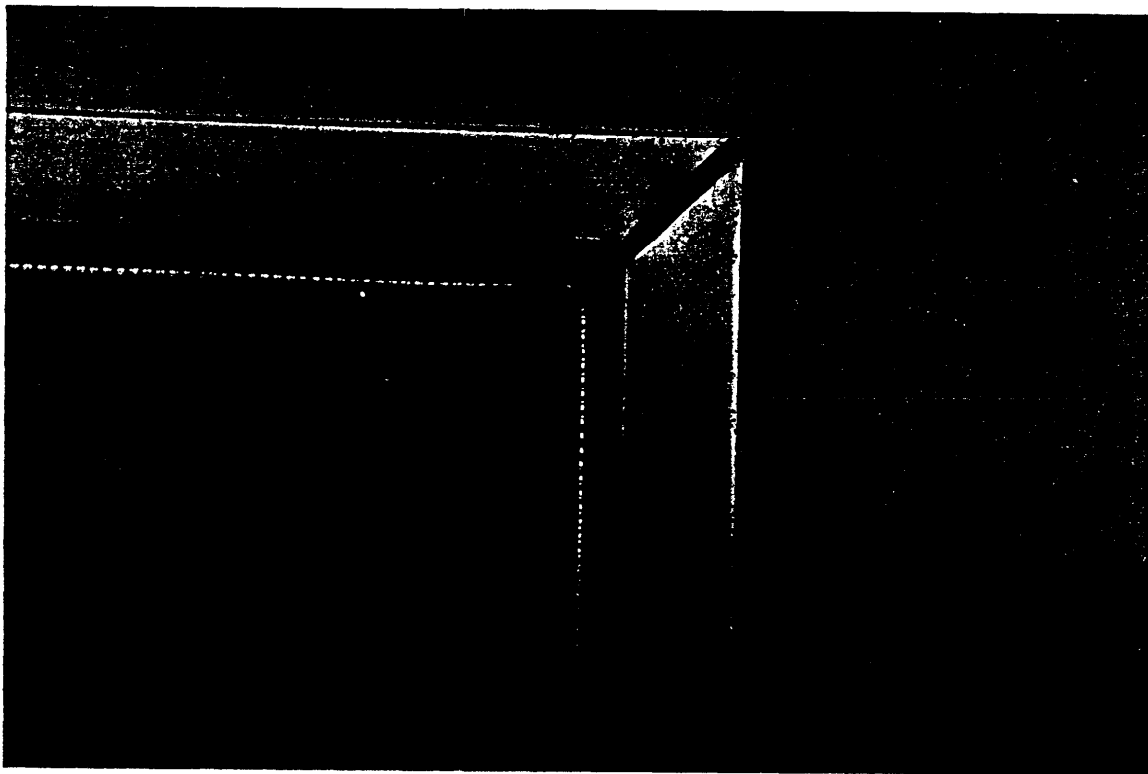
5



6

Task No. 930512CCN1610

Photo #7 shows a close-up of a corner to one of the screens to show how the screen material is affixed to the frame.

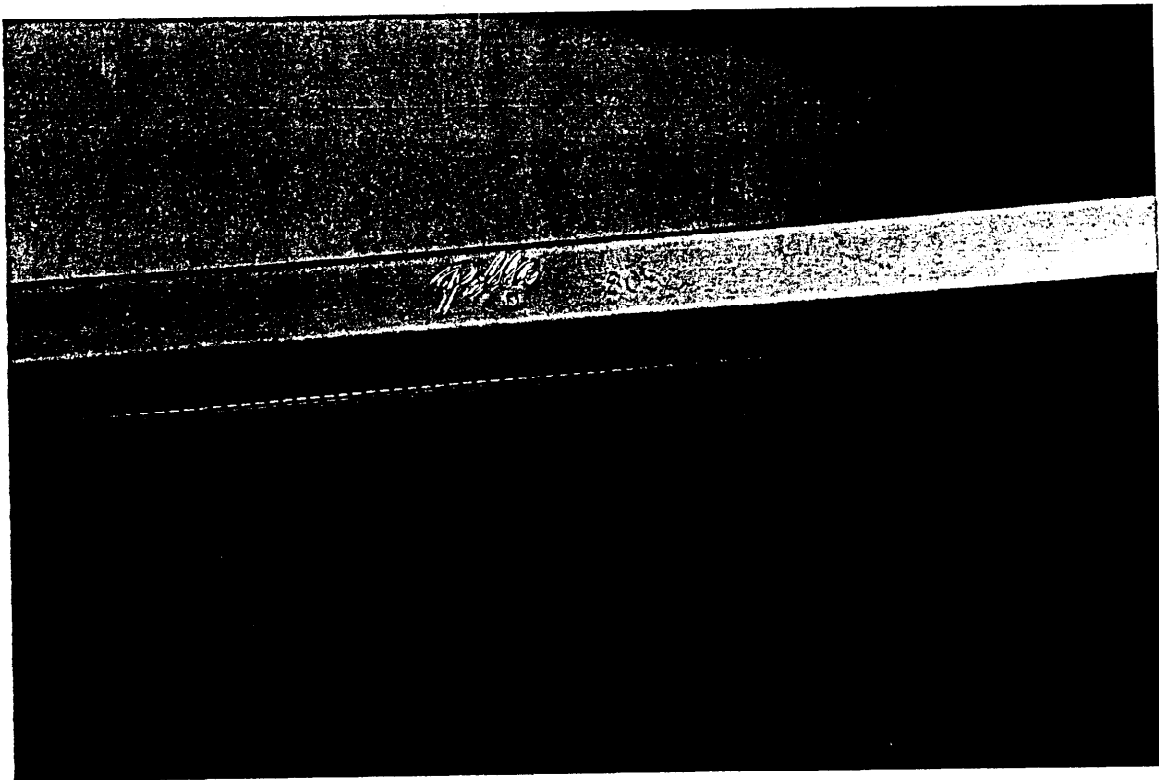


7

Task No. 930512CCN1610

Photo #8 shows the identification of "Pella 808C" on the frame. Pella is the manufacturer of the frame, and the assembler of the screen material to the frame. However, Pella is not the manufacturer of the screen material.

Phifer Wire Products is the manufacturer of the screen material, but I found no identification of it on the product. I found no other product identification.



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